



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

87-YEAR-OLD SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN CHILD SEX TOURISM CASE *Orange County Man Planned Liaisons with Two Preteen Girls from the Philippines*

SANTA ANA, Calif. — An 87-year-old Garden Grove man was sentenced in federal court today to 20 years in prison on six counts related to child sex tourism. In addition, John W. Seljan will be required to register as a sex offender and must remain under court supervision for the rest of his life once he is released.

Seljan was convicted following a bench trial in November on charges involving his plans to travel to the Philippines to engage in sex with two girls, ages 9 and 12. Specifically, Seljan was found guilty of: Attempted Travel with Intent To Engage in a Sexual Act With a Juvenile (1 count); Use of an Interstate Facility to Entice a Minor to Engage in a Criminal Sexual Act (1 count); Production of Child Pornography (2 counts); and Possession of Child Pornography (2 counts).

Seljan was arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in October 2003, at Los Angeles International Airport as he prepared to board a flight bound for the Philippines. In his luggage at the time of his arrest, ICE agents discovered pornographic materials, some of which appeared to involve children, sexual aids, and nearly 100 pounds of chocolates and candy. In addition, Seljan had in his possession several thousand dollars in U.S. and Philippine currency. A subsequent search of Seljan's Garden Grove residence turned up more child pornography.

"Today's sentence sends a strong message that any abuse of children by American citizens is a crime and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," said Loraine Brown, special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in Los Angeles. "Some pedophiles mistakenly believe they can escape detection and prosecution by committing child sex crimes overseas. As this case shows, ICE is using all of its law enforcement authorities to combat this heinous behavior both here and abroad."

The investigation culminating with today's sentencing began in August of 2003 after routine inspection of outbound foreign mail by San Francisco-based officers for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) turned up incriminating correspondence and parcels Seljan was sending to the Philippines. The seized correspondence indicated Seljan planned to travel to the Philippines to engage in sexual acts with the two preteens. Agents say Seljan apparently knew the girls and their families from previous trips to the Philippines.

The Orange County man was the first person in the country to actually stand trial on child sex tourism charges under the provisions of the recently passed PROTECT Act. The PROTECT Act substantially boosted the penalties in these types of cases and modified the burden of proof requirements for federal prosecutors to bring charges.

Seljan's arrest and prosecution is part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE enforcement initiative to protect children from pornographers, child prostitution rings, Internet predators, alien smugglers, human traffickers, and other predatory criminals. Since the initiative began in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 5,300 individuals nationwide, including more than 1,400 in California.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.